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The FIRST COLLEGIATE MEDAL

Issued in America

--- 1772 ---

from Raymond H. Williamson;
Lynchburg, Virginia



JOHN WHITE'S
BOTETOURT MEDAL



Photograph enlarged 1.5x

Sequential page 653

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The FIRST COLLEGIATE MEDAL Issued in America - 1772 -
 A Short Review of 100 years of Numismatic Research,
 ..nd -- John White's Botetourt Medal

(RF-62)

• • from Raymond H. Williamson; Lynchburg, Virginia

Exactly 100 years ago, in the October 1878 issue of *The American Journal of Numismatics* (Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 47) there appeared the following brief inquiry from a Mr. Isaac F. Wood:

MEDAL OF WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE, VIRGINIA.

THE following from page 42 of the "History of the College of William and Mary from its Foundation, 1660 to 1874," may be of interest. "The colonial governors, for the most part, took an active interest in the welfare of the College. * * * Lord Botetourt gave a sum of money, the interest of which was sufficient to purchase annually two gold medals—one to be given to the best classical scholar, the other to the best scholar in philosophy. The medal was annually awarded until the Revolution. The first competitors for the Episcopate of Virginia, the Rev. James Madison and the Rev. Samuel Shield; both received this medal; the former in 1772, the latter in 1773. This medal was also conferred on Mr. Nathaniel Burwell in 1772; Mr. David Stewart, of King George, in 1773; on Mr. Joseph Eggleston, of Amelia, 1774; and the same year, on Mr. Walker Maury, of Williamsburg; and in 1775, on Mr. John White, of King William, and Mr. Thomas Evans, of the Eastern Shore of Virginia."

There is no other mention or description of the medal given in the book. Does any reader of the *Journal* know more about it?

ISAAC F. WOOD.

New York, July 15, 1878.

My interest in this reference was kindled by a short article appearing in the April 1978 issue of An Occasional Bulletin (No. 36, pp. 13-15) published by The Virginia Historical Society. The article, "John White's Botetourt Medal", was researched and written by Dr. John Melville Jennings, Director of the Society and is reproduced beginning on page 659 of this issue of CNL.

This medal is listed by Betts (in 1894) as #528, as follows:

WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE, VIRGINIA.

528. 1772. Two gold Medals, one for the best Classical scholar, the other to the best scholar in Philosophy, were awarded to students of the College of William and Mary, Virginia. These were "purchased annually" with the income of a gift to the College made by Lord Botetourt (Norborne Berkeley), Governor of the Province from 1768 until his death in 1770. The names of eight of the recipients are given in the "History of the College of William and Mary," (p. 42) and in A. J. N., XIII, 47. No description of the Medal has been found; it was probably engraved.

Note that John White's medal is gold, holed and not engraved but regularly struck.

Some seven years later the Botetourt Medal was mentioned once again in the pages of *The American Journal of Numismatics* (AJN). In the July 1895 issue (Vol.30, No.1, pp.17-19) we find:

THE BOTETOURT MEDAL OF WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE.

In his "American Colonial History Illustrated by Contemporary Medals," the late Mr. Betts mentions (No. 528, p. 234) certain Medals which were awarded to students in the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. These Medals were purchased annually, with the income of a gift to the College made by Lord Botetourt (Norborne Berkeley), but the award seems to have ceased when the Revolution began; the existence of these Medals has long been known, but their extreme rarity made it apparently impossible to obtain any description of them, and Mr. Betts came to the conclusion that they were probably engraved, although on account of the uncertainty as to this point, he did not exclude them from his list.

The attention of the Editors has been called by Mr. W. S. Appleton to several notices of these Medals which have recently appeared in the "William and Mary Quarterly," a magazine of the College where they were bestowed. From these articles we have compiled the following account and description of them. In the October issue (1894, p. 144), it is said that Lord Botetourt, when Governor, provided two gold medals, which were awarded for four years, as prizes for the students of the College. This statement apparently needs some qualification, for he died in 1770, two years before the first Medals were awarded, as the earliest account found says they were awarded in 1772; they were given again in 1773, '74, and '75, four years in all so far as has yet been discovered, when the custom was apparently discontinued, no doubt because of the condition of public affairs. If they were given in his life-time, then the names of the recipients previous to 1772 are unknown; it is more probable that they were "Foundation" Medals, purchased by the income of a gift or bequest to the College by that popular young Governor, who died when but thirty-two, after holding his office only about two years.

The Medals were given in two departments of study, viz.:—for excellence in mathematics, and in languages, according to one account, but according to a vote on the College Records, printed on page 270 of the April number of the Magazine quoted, "for Philosophical Learning," and "for the encouragement of Classical Learning." Those for excellence in the first department were awarded as follows: In 1772 to Nathanael Burwell; in 1773 to David Stewart; in 1774 to Joseph Eggleston, and in 1775 to Daniel White. The Classical Medal in 1772 to James Madison (afterwards President of the College and Bishop of Virginia); in 1773 to Samuel Shield; in 1774 to Walker Maury, and in 1775 to Thomas Evans. Of these eight Medals only two are known to have been preserved to the present time. Mr. P. L. Burwell (to whom the possession of the first one was erroneously attributed in the October number of the Quarterly) writes to its editor in the January number (p. 207), that he did not inherit it, but that Col. Nathanael Burwell's widow gave it to their grandson, Nath'l Burwell, of Carter's Hall, when he was "a very small boy, and after his death it became the property of Mr. George H. Burwell, residing near Millwood, Clarke Co., Va., who still has it. That given to Samuel Shield is mentioned in the Will (proved June 20, 1824) of his son, Col. Robert Shield, who requests his brother, the distinguished lawyer Henry Howard Shield, to keep it, and at his death to transfer it to any of his (Robert's) sons then living, 'so that it may be handed down to the male members of our family so long as a just estimate shall be placed by them upon the merits and virtues of him on whom it was honorably, and I hope I may add, worthily bestowed.'"

The Rev. Samuel Shield, D. D., entered William and Mary in 1769, and the "Philosophy School" in 1771; the award was made to him by vote of the "President and Masters" July 29, 1773. He later became a clergyman, and was the minister of Drysdale Parish, in Caroline Co., and subsequently of "York-Hampton," and the adjoining "Charles" parishes. He was, if we are not mistaken, a prominent candidate for the Bishopric of Virginia, against Dr. Madison, who received the "Classical Medal" the year previous to that in which it was won by Dr. Shield. Some interesting notes on his life are given in the April Quarterly (p. 270). His Medal is now in the possession of the Misses Shield, of Hampton, daughters of Mallory Shield, Esq.

An engraving of this Medal, copied from that last mentioned, is given on p. 270 of the Quarterly. The obverse has King William crowned, seated in a chair on a low dais at the right of the field, and facing left; he wears small-clothes and a short robe, which falls a little way through the arm of the chair; his left foot, extended, rests on the edge of the dais, and the knee of the right leg is shown, but the foot is wanting, giving a curious effect to the figure; in the centre background stands Queen Mary facing, crowned, and in the costume of the period; her left hand rests on the back of the royal chair. Kneeling in front of the King at the left, and facing him, is the Rev. Dr. Blair, in scholastic robes, his head bare, and the ends of his long hair curling upward behind; with his right hand he receives the Charter from the King. Legend, GVL · ET MAR · TRADVNT BLARO CHART · COL · (William and Mary deliver the Charter of the College to Blair.) In exergue, in two lines, ANNO REGNI | QVARTO (In the fourth year of their reign.) This seems to fix the date of the Charter as 1692; conflicting dates have been given by different authorities. The reverse has a naked bust of George III, in profile to the right, with long, flowing hair. Legend, REGNANTE GEORGIO TERTIO MVSVS AMICO (George the Third, a friend to the Muses, reigning.) Below the decollation, in two lines, QVÆSITVM MERITIS (Sought by the deserving.) The Medals were of gold; the size is not given, but was apparently about that of a Half Dollar.

"The Rev. Mr. John Camm" was President of the College when the award was made to Shield, and the two gentlemen were afterward brothers-in-law, having married sisters.

The Rev. James Blair, who is represented as receiving the Charter, was a Scottish divine in the time of Charles II; he was sent in 1685 as a Missionary to Virginia, and was the first President of the College. He died in 1743.

Aside from the rarity of these Medals they have a special historic interest, being we believe the earliest awards for scholarship in the British colonies in America, though there were Academic Medals given in Lima, South America, in 1754. There is nothing in the engraving or description to lead us to suppose they were engraved, and we hope to be able later to determine this point with certainty.

W. T. R. M.

Apparently not completely satisfied with the content of their summary report, the AJN Editors continued their research with a letter directed to William and Mary College in an attempt to clarify the question raised by Betts with his supposition that the medal "was probably engraved".

In the subsequent issue of of AJN (Vol. 30, No. 2, pp.51-52, October 1895) appeared a letter from President Lyon G. Tyler of William and Mary College:

THE WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE MEDALS.

We have the pleasure of printing below a letter from President Tyler, of William and Mary College, Virginia, in reply to our inquiry whether the Prize Medals in gold, of that venerable institution of learning, described in the last number of the *Journal* (p. 17), were engraved (as supposed by Betts, in "Historical Medals of America," No. 528, p. 234), or struck from dies. There were Collegiate Medals awarded in Lima, Peru, as mentioned in our last issue, as early as 1754 (see Betts, Nos. 398 and 399); a Medal in honor of Charles III, struck by the University of Mexico, according to Herrera (see Betts, note on 478), in 1760; this, however, was not an award Medal but a Proclamation Piece; and another of the "Academy" (? University) of Mexico, during the reign of that King—1759-88—but of uncertain date. The Berkeley—St. Paul's College—Medal of 1726 (Betts, 159), bears the name of a projected institution which never materialized, and it also had nothing to do with scholarship. These are all the issues at present known, which were struck for American Colleges previous to the Botetourt Medal, and the claim that these interesting pieces of William and Mary College are the first medallic awards for scholastic attainment made in the territory now occupied by the United States, is therefore established.—EDS.

To the Editor of the Journal:

In reply to your inquiry, I take pleasure in stating that I have in my keeping the original dies from which the gold Medals given by Lord Botetourt were struck. These Medals stopped with the Revolution, and have not since been bestowed. But at a meeting of the College authorities about a year ago, I urged their re-establishment; and I have no doubt that as soon as our finances will justify it, the Medals will be awarded as of old. I agree with you in regarding the Medals as most interesting. The Faculty in 1771, at the request of the Duke of Beaufort, permitted a tablet to be erected in the Chapel to Lord Botetourt's memory. He was buried in our Chapel, at his own expressed desire. The first of the Botetourt Medals was given, July 29, 1772, to Nathaniel Burwell of "the Grove," and it is spoken of "as the Medal assigned by his Excellency Lord Botetourt for the encouragement of Students in Philosophical learning." The same day "the Medal assigned by his Lordship for the encouragement of Classical learning" was given to Mr. James Madison, afterwards first Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Virginia, and President of the College. There was no difference between them. As they were awarded two years after Botetourt's decease, I am inclined to think that they were established by his will, which is probably on record in England. I cannot answer your question where the dies were engraved, but I presume in England under the directions of the Executor of Lord Botetourt.

It would seem that William and Mary was not only the first College to institute an intercollegiate society—the Phi Beta Kappa, but was the first to offer an Educational Prize Medal. In this it was only conforming to its character as first in many things. It was the first, as early as 1729, to have a full corps of Professors, Masters of Oxford, etc. Harvard, till the Revolution, had but one Professor, instruction being imparted chiefly by tutors. It was the first to establish a Chair of Law under George Wythe, and a Chair of Medicine under Dr. James McClurg. It was the first to assume the name of University, as it did in 1779. It was the first to depart from the curriculum of Oxford and permit an election of schools. It was the first to establish a Chair of History, under L. H. Gerardin, the historian of Virginia.

And while I am praising the old mother, I might be pardoned for adding that in building the Union she stands easily first among the Colleges. She gave to the Continental Congress its first President, Peyton Randolph; she gave Thomas Jefferson the draughtsman of the Declaration of Independence, and four of its signers—Jefferson, Harrison, Braxton and Wythe. She gave John Tyler, who carried through the Virginia Legislature the resolution to convene the Assembly at Annapolis, which brought about the Federal Convention at Philadelphia. In that convention she was represented by Dr. McClurg and Edward Randolph, the chief draughtsman of the Constitution. She gave to the Federal Bench the great Chief Justice, John Marshall. And to her three Presidents of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe and John Tyler, the Union owes Louisiana, Florida, Texas and California, and all the new States and Territories made out of them, constituting more than half the present territory of the Union.

I am, dear Sir,

LYON G. TYLER.

And finally, the last of the AJN references (Vol.30, No. 4, p. 114, April 1896), contains several excerpts from a subsequent letter from President Tyler of William and Mary College wherein he describes the dies for the Botetourt Medals:

THE WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE MEDAL.

We had the pleasure of printing an article from Pres. Tyler, of William and Mary College, in October last, relative to the Botetourt Medals, which, as there stated, were the first Collegiate medals issued in our country; he now informs us that he has lately examined the original dies, which are in a good state of preservation. He writes: "They have a steel disc, one and three-fourths inches in diameter, let in an iron octagon, each of whose faces is two inches by one and three-fourths inches. Each die weighs two pounds ten ounces avoirdupois. On one of the faces I contrived, after a good deal of cleaning, to ascertain the names of the makers, "[Mc]Cartney and Bayley." I have enclosed the first two letters in brackets, as my reading is somewhat conjectural as to them, owing to the rust. The other letters are plain enough. . . . I have examined one of these medals, which as you will remember, were struck in gold; the figures and letters on that are beautifully defined, and show superior art in the cutting."

We thus learn who supplied the original dies of these interesting pieces; as they have so close a relation to English history, we hope some of our friends in England will be able to furnish us with information concerning the die-cutters.

It appears from these references that this medal is in fact the first collegiate medal to be issued in what is today the continental United States. The dies produced by McCartney & Bayley, presumably of London, were still at Williamsburg in 1894, which indicates that the medals may have been struck by a local goldsmith. While I find no trace of McCartney, J. (Jas.) Bayley is given by Dalton & Hamer as "Proprietor" of Dorsetshire 6 halfpenny and 11 farthing of Dorsetshire, as does Atkins; that is, the tokens advertised the "draper" business of Bayley. So I really know nil regarding the manufacturer or diesinker for the Botetourt medal! Perhaps our Patrons can add to the material on this subject.

No additional references have been located.

● ● ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ● ● ●

Our sincere thanks to Dr. John M. Jennings, Director of the Virginia Historical Society, and to the Society, for their kind permission to reprint Dr. Jenning's article "John White's Botetourt Medal" and for the use of the photograph of the medal. Additionally, to Mr. Francis D. Campbell, Jr., Librarian for the American Numismatic Society for his search for additional references and for providing reproductions of the AJN articles for use in this report.

JCS

● ● from AN OCCASIONAL BULLETIN

of The Virginia Historical Society
No. 36, April 1978, pages 13 - 15

JOHN WHITE'S BOTETOURT MEDAL

From time to time treasures long held by the Society are paraded in these pages to serve as reminders of its continuing interest in acquiring such materials and, frankly, to recall with satisfaction the rarities already incorporated in the collections. The accompanying illustrations of the Botetourt Medal—obverse and reverse—that came to the Society in 1918 serve those purposes. Only eight of the medals were awarded before the American Revolution disrupted the scheme, only three are believed to have survived, and this is the only one of the impressions preserved in institutional hands.

The March 22, 1770, issue of Purdie & Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* carried an announcement of the amiable Lord Botetourt's intention to establish the eponymous awards:

His Excellency the Gouvernour has been pleased to signify to the President and Professors of William and Mary college his intention to give, annually, two gold medals for the honour and encouragement of literary merit in that Seminary.

A delay in commencing the presentations—the first two awards were not made until 1772—was doubtless caused by the need for developing an appropriate design for the medals

and then for securing the dies from which they could be struck. Miraculously enough, in view of the tragic losses of records sustained by the college in later years, the original dies, made by "McCartney & Bayley," presumably of London, are still in the possession of the college. Their survival in Williamsburg seems to suggest that the medals were struck by a local goldsmith.

The impression owned by the Society was presented to John Camm White (ca. 1756-1795) in the College Chapel on August 15, 1775, at traditional ceremonies marking the anniversary of Transfer Day. The scene can be envisioned. The president of the college, contentious and widely disliked John Camm, presided, overlooking an assemblage of distinguished guests who were doubtless discomforted by the sweltering heat of a midsummer day in Tidewater Virginia. One by one, the students singled out for honors delivered in Latin their respective addresses. John White, on the other hand, ascended the rostrum and pronounced his oration "in English, setting forth advantages of education and the grateful memory of the Founders." He was awarded the Botetourt Medal "for his superior skill in mathematics and natural philosophy." Incidentally, it might be noted that the Tory president of the college, John Camm, was first cousin to John White's mother.

Young White was the son of Elizabeth (Camm) White and the Reverend Alexander White, rector of St. David's Parish, King William County. Prior to matriculating at the college in 1772, he attended the celebrated school conducted in King and Queen County by Donald Robertson. Highly regarded by the William and Mary authorities, the youth was appointed Usher of the College on July 30, 1776, a short-lived assignment, no doubt, for the college was entering a period of drastic reorganization. White, in any event, was exceptionally fortunate in 1778 in winning the hand of Judith Braxton, the daughter of Signer of the Declaration of Independence Carter Braxton. The union allied him with virtually every prominent family in Virginia.



The couple established their residence at White Hall, a handsome and commodious brick mansion overlooking the Mattaponi River in King and Queen County. White thereupon seemingly led the relatively uneventful but comfortable life of a typical tidewater planter. He served as a "gentleman justice" of his county and, greatly to his credit, on at least one occasion furnished a substantial supply of brandy "for the use of the [Revolutionary] Army." About 1784, however, he removed his family to neighboring King William County where he died, just short of his fortieth birthday, in 1795.

John White's Botetourt Medal descended either through the line of his daughter, Mary Page White, who became the wife of Andrew Stevenson, or his other daughter, Judith White, who became the wife of William Brockenbrough. To show how tangled these Virginia relationships became, the medal was left to the Society by Mary White (Stevenson) Colston, a granddaughter of Mary Page (White) Stevenson and the widow of Edward Colston, a grandson of Judith (White) Brockenbrough.

SECOND THOUGHTS on the QUANTITIES of SMALL PINE TREE SHILLINGS

from Ken Bressett; Racine, Wisconsin

(TN-75A)

The story of Hannah Hull's dowry has apparently still not lost its appeal for being retold and embellished. The tale has now reached new stature in Walter Breen's attempt to use it as a basis for determining possible production quantities for the small Pine Tree Shilling coinage (CNL #51, p.624, TN-75).

Sydney Noe's postulation that small size shillings were not coined before 1675 is valid, and has been accepted for many years. It logically established that the new size can confidently be attributed to requirements for stepped-up coinage under terms of the final contract which was dated May 12, 1675 and signed on July 9 of that year.

The previous coinage contract (under which large size shillings were struck) extended for seven years from October 9, 1667, and expired in October of 1674. In the interval between contracts, Hull and Sanderson were in fact relieved of their charge and were referred to as "the former mint masters". Thus, in the period from mid-October 1674 until mid-July of 1675 no Massachusetts silver was coined, Hull and Sanderson were not under contract, and they were not even assured that they might continue the minting operation.

This period of inactivity corresponds exactly with the precise date of Hannah Hull's marriage to Samuel Sewall. The date is specifically recorded as February 28, 1675, and this is well documented in John Hull's personal diary in the following entry:

"1675, Feb.28, being Monday, Mr. Broadstreet married
my daughter Hannah to Samuel Sewall, in the evening."

Although the Hull genealogy places the date of the wedding as 11th of May, 1675, it seems safer to rely on the Hull diary as being more accurate. At any rate, the event assuredly did take place at a time when John Hull was not acting as mint master, and before the small size shillings were coined.

The size of the fabled dowry, and number of shillings that may have been included, can also be accurately assessed by examining the Sewall ledger to determine when and how the payment was made. The entry is quite clear; the dowry was indeed £ 500 -- a generous sum at a time when half that amount would purchase a comfortable homestead. If the 18 year old Hannah weighed 125 pounds, then the total did in fact equal her weight in silver shillings.

Sewall's ledger, however, reveals that the sum was not paid in cash, and unfortunately dispels the colorful myth about the thousands of beautiful shillings that might have been weighed out to balance the blushing bride.

The bridegroom's account books show the following entries for 1675:

1675	Dr.	1675	Cr.
My Father-in-law, Mr. John Hull, to his Free Promise	£ 500.0.0	Feb. 11, By money received	.. £ 30.0.0
		Mar. 13, " " "	.. 35.0.0
		By balance when new Stated	
		Accts 435.0.0

Thus we find that only two dates show actual cash receipts: 17 days before, and a fortnight after, Sewall's marriage to John Hull's daughter.

While the £ 65 may have been paid in large size Pine Tree shillings, it is clear that the balance of £ 435 was paid by being passed in a balance to a new account.

The Diaries of John Hull published by the American Antiquarian Society, Boston, 1857 are the source for these facts. The diary also contains a wealth of information pertaining to the activities of Hull and events of the time. It can only be regretted that almost nothing has been discovered dealing with the day-to-day workings of his minting operation.

Until such records come to light it is still impossible to even speculate on the number of Massachusetts silver pieces that may have been produced through intermittent coinage over a thirty year period.

The 1840 Sale of Col. Ogden's Property in Newark, N.J.
from T.D. Howe; Houston, Texas

(TN-77)

Running through some old papers of an early 19th century ancestor I came across this advertisement on a partial page from a Newark, New Jersey newspaper of June 13, 1840 advertising the sale of property formerly owned by Col. Ogden whom I assume to have been Matthias of the Goads, Cox & Mould New Jersey Coppers contract. Perhaps it will be of interest to CNL Patrons.

CHANCERY SALE of very desirable Property, formerly the Country Seat of Col. Ogden, situate at the Head of Broad street, Newark, and adjoining the splendid Mansion and Grounds of Col Plume; contains 6 acres, or thereabouts; on the premises is a large House, with a spring of first rate water in the Cellar, and a fine stream runs through the premises, which can be used for Manufacturing purposes.
It will be sold on the 20th June, at 2 o'clock, P. M. at Stewart's Hotel, Newark, under a decree of the Court of Chancery.
Newark, June 13th, 1840. je13-7t

Another EARLY ILLUSTRATION that Crime Doesn't Pay.

(TN-78)

- from Edward R. Barnsley; Beach Haven, New Jersey

At a session of the Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Court of Quarter Sessions held on September 16, 1691 ---

"George philips being taken up for a runaway by Thomas Brock & brought before this Court being searched was found in his pocket 1 purs in which was foure pounds 9 d. silver mony and one brass 9 d. bit who upon his examination Confest that he had taken the Said monys in the night time out of the Closet of Denis Linstone with whom he had lived about 3 months as alsoe one paire of gloves."

A later record states that the 9 d. piece was "bad", hence we presume that it must have been one of those homemade spurious coins which circulated among the early Quaker settlers of Pennsylvania in the 17th Century.

What happened to poor George? The boy was put into servitude for six months to make "satisfaction to the partie greived as the law requires", and he had "15 stripes on his bare back well Layd on now in the sight of the Court."

- Editor's note: A brass 9 d. bit -?-



The Use of "Brass Discs" in Colonial America.

(TN-79)

- from ye Editor

In the Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution by George C. Neumann and Frank J. Kravic (Castle Books, Secaucus, N.J.; August 1977) on page 195, illustration #39, are shown two plain brass disks, one about 1/2 d. size and the other about farthing size.

The caption states: (39) Two brass discs; because of the coin scarcity tavern owners and sutlers issued these brass discs which passed readily as specie."

Would any of our Patrons care to comment on the use of "Brass Discs" as specie, or on the "brass 9 d. bit" mentioned in TN- 78 above?



**A NEW CONNECTICUT DIE COMBINATION --- Miller 16.2-NN.2 of 1787
from Robert A Vlack; Plaistow, New Hampshire (TN-80)**

It has been quite a while since the discovery of a new Connecticut die variety and since the Connecticut Coppers were basically my very first love in the Colonial field, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to report this new muling after so long a time. This specimen was purchased in Hartford, Connecticut last year during the NENA Convention.

It is obvious that this is a later combination of previously known dies. Both the obverse and reverse dies are of a later die state than their previous pairings, 16.2 - NN.1 and 16.6 - NN.2 respectively. The obverse shows severe die deterioration around the letters ORI of AUCTORI and mostly flattening of the all around die. On the reverse the entire upper portion of the die is all but gone with the upper stars blending into the field, and a die bulge beginning from the head of seated Britannia, through the star and to the E of ET-LIB. I believe this late pairing accounts for its rarity because the appearance indicates very tired dies and was not used for any length of time.

All photographs enlarged 1.6x



16.2-NN.1



16.2-NN.2



16.6-NN.2



new die combination

● ● COMMENTS on the COUNTERFEITING of "Spanish Bitts and New England Shillings"
from Eric P. Newman; St. Louis, Missouri (G-3B)

The November, 1977 issue (CNL Vol.16, No. 3, page 609) included a summary of the conviction at Philadelphia in August, 1683 of counterfeiters accused of coining "Spanish Bitts and New England Shillings". This gem of information was located by Edward R. Barnsley in the published minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania (Colonial Records, Philadelphia 1852, Volume I, pp.84-89, 91-92). I think it is important to point out that only Spanish bitts (New Bitts) were counterfeited. Silver heavily adulterated with copper was the material used and the dies were produced in America. According to the report "New England shillings" or "Boston money" were not actually counterfeited even though Governor William Penn accused the defendants of having done so. A Proclamation was issued August 27, 1683 "to put downe Bitts of Coyne, so Called" and there was no mention of either of Boston money or New England shillings in the Proclamation. The confusion was apparently created by Governor Penn because an attempt had been made to pass the counterfeit New Bitts to pay New England men an amount presumably in New England shillings (money of account). When the New England men rejected the New Bitts the passer undertook to have Mary Bartholomew, Among others, change some counterfeit New Bitts for other money so the other money could be paid to New England men.

The reason I feel this fact is so important is that the counterfeiting of coined Massachusetts silver at the time of their extended use has never been documented to my knowledge. Joseph B. Felt in 1839 and Sylvester S. Crosby in 1873 quoted some general counterfeiting matters, but there is no mention of Massachusetts silver being counterfeited for circulation. Noe referred only to clipping and to fabrications and imitations of modern origin. Taxay in 1970 (p.4) listed Pine Tree Shillings Noe 13, 14 and 31 "as probably fabrications as known specimens are very much underweight and seem to have been deliberately struck on small planchets to simulate clipped coins". He also referred to the unique Pine Tree Shilling Noe 12 from the Castine Hoard found in 1840 as "possibly a contemporary counterfeit". In the 1973 Quarterman Publications compilation, The Silver Coinage of Massachusetts, Walter Breen (p. 246) used "unique early counterfeit" in referring to Pine Tree Shillings Noe 12 and 31. Thus it appears that no early documentary evidence has been located that Massachusetts silver was counterfeited for circulation and that only modern opinions exist that certain of the coins were or might have been such counterfeits. Has anyone any references or data to enlighten us on the subject?

- Editor's note: The full text of these proceedings appeared in a subsequent issue of CNL as TN-76 "The First Recorded Trial of Counterfeiters in America". (CNL #51, pages 628-629) JCS

